

Mexican Bishops' Pastoral on Church's Efforts to Improve Condition of Workingmen

Mexico, Cárdenas, and the Church

JAIME CASTIELLO, S.J.

The Calles Aftermath

RANDALL POND

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Mexican Bishops' Pastoral on Church's Efforts to Improve Conditions of Workingmen

The joint Pastoral of the Hierarchy of Mexico, addressed to the workingmen and farmers of that country, dated at Mexico City, June 12, 1936. Text of translation furnished by the News Service of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

BELOVED SONS IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

For many years now there has been developing an intense campaign of propaganda which concerns you and the purpose of which is to draw you away from the Divine Redeemer and His Holy Church. It has been said and is being repeated that religion is the opium which rich men and priests administer to the people to render them unable to demand their rights or obtain any improvement of their social, economic, and moral condition. The doctrines of Socialism and Communism are presented as truths and you are asked to remain dumb in the face of the errors preached by Karl Marx. You are promised that a régime will be set up under which the entire earth will be transformed into a paradise of delights, in which poverty will be finally conquered. In ringing tones, a classless society is proclaimed.

CANNOT BE SILENT

We would be neglectful of the duty we have as pastors of the souls entrusted to us by Jesus Christ if we did not come to your protection, warning you of the imminent danger which threatens you if you accept errors of this kind. Not only the eternal salvation of your souls is at stake. In this paradise offered to you, you will be nothing but pariahs, slaves without the consolations which are the fruit of material well-being just as truly as you will be without those consolations which God usually grants to us in the spiritual order. It is all the more urgent at this time that, as Fathers and Pastors, we address our word to you because this campaign of hate against Christ Our Lord and against His Church has been notably intensified both in its fury and its maliciousness. For the old leaders, who were sectarian,

there have now been substituted other leaders, more fanatical, who profess doctrines and adopt procedures that are even more destructive of order and everything good.

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH, THE REDEEMERS OF THE WORKINGMAN

They preach a false doctrine who tell you that Christ Our Lord and His Church are opposed to your true interest. Quite the contrary is true. Nothing more surely or more effectively conduced to the redemption of the man who lives by the labor of his hands than the principles which He taught and to which the Church gives practical application.

EQUALITY AS TAUGHT BY CHRIST

Audacious and malicious men try to mislead you, telling you that we are all absolutely equal. They are always careful, however, to set themselves up as your chiefs, as your tyrants, subjecting you to a rigorous discipline and making you slaves of the very men you thought were your redeemers. How different is the doctrine of Christ! He teaches the true equality of all men. We have all the same origin—God. We have all the same end—God. We have all the same Divine Redeemer—Jesus Christ. He shed His blood for all, all men without exception, and if there is any who is not saved, the fault will be his only. No man, therefore, can stand between any one of us and God, who is Our Lord. No one can prevent us from accomplishing our destiny. From this is deduced the principle of personal dignity. Man cannot be a blind instrument in the hands of some other man, because every man has the same origin, the same end, the same Redeemer, the same destiny to fulfill in this life, namely, to save himself. Rightly, therefore, is it said that no one, absolutely no one but the Catholic Church, can set himself up as the supreme guardian of personal dignity, the dignity of man. "There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female," exclaimed St. Paul, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

THE DIGNITY OF MAN

Man is free because he is a rational being and thus essentially different from an animal which acts only by instinct. Man has dignity because of his lofty destiny, because of his

origin and through the merits of his Redeemer. Because of this, his labor has dignity.

THE DIGNITY OF MARRIAGE

The union of man and woman should have for its end not the satisfaction of the base tendencies of our fallen nature. That union is a bond that is sacred, indissoluble, the union of one man with one woman before God and before man for the purpose of establishing a home and founding a family and of giving children to the fatherland and populating heaven.

THE DIGNITY OF WOMAN

The rôle of woman is not to be the slave of man because woman has a soul that has been redeemed just as man has. The rôle of woman is not to be a vile instrument of pleasure. The rôle of woman is to be the companion of man. What is more worthy of esteem and admiration than the Christian woman who, understanding, fulfills her duties, mindful always of the Most High? "O, ye gods immortal!" exclaimed the pagans in the early days of Christianity, "O, ye gods immortal, what wives these Christian women are!" These exquisite virtues which continue to be the most glorious jewel of the Mexican woman stand high in the admiration of the world, reaching their highest perfection in the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

The child is not the slave of his parents, as he usually was in the sad days of paganism. The child is a gift which parents receive from God and for which they will have to render a strict account to the Lord of every created thing.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOR

Labor, the activity of man, is not merchandise to be subjected to the free play of offer and demand. Labor is something more sacred because in a certain sense labor is a part of the laborer and necessarily shares the dignity attributed to man. It is not licit to contract with regard to the labor of man as if it were question of the labor of a beast. This, to its everlasting discredit, was the liberal theory which has predominated in Mexico from the time when the liberal régime got control of the destinies of our country.

JUST WAGE

From these principles of Catholicism is deduced the obligation to pay a just wage, which, in truth, is to be not that which is accepted by the workingman under pressure of pressing necessity but that which is sufficient to sustain the workingman who is frugal and of good habits. Because man does not live alone but forms part of a family, the wage should be sufficient to cover the necessities of that family, the average family being the standard.

THE CHURCH FULFILLS HER MISSION BY SAVING SOULS BUT THE CHURCH STRIVES FOR ORDER IN SOCIETY AND MAKES AN EFFORT TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF MAN

It is false to say that the Church is so absorbed in the fulfillment of her divine mission that she does not stoop to employ practical measures in her effort to provide for the needs of the workingman but restricts her action to the theoretical announcement of principles of justice and charity. Beloved sons in Christ, never forget that, although it is true that the mission of the Church is the eternal salvation of souls, the Church well knows that these souls are united to bodies; that individuals, who are the union of body and soul, form society, and that in society there should be available everything required to satisfy those needs which are inherent in man's nature. Many of these needs are material in character and whatever contributes to the satisfaction of these, as truly as those that are spiritual in character, is a means which contributes to enable man to live with order and, what is the same thing, virtuously. The possession of some material goods is necessary for good and virtuous living, says St. Thomas Aquinas. "I have compassion on the multitude," said Jesus Christ after having preached to them, and He worked the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes.

THE INTERVENTION OF THE STATE ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

To coördinate properly the ownership and distribution of material goods; to bring about the reign of justice in the relations between capital and labor, the Catholic teaching,

never failing to recognize the legitimacy of the right of property, does not deny to the State as does the liberal theory, the right to use the authority of the laws and institutions for the assistance of the workingman or to see that in the wage contract proper terms are made in the interest of the workingman and of the class of which he is a member, including a just wage, Sunday rest, limited hours of labor, just compensation for injury, etc., etc.

THE RIGHT OF THE LABORER TO ORGANIZE

Our doctrine goes further. It not only admits the right of the State to guarantee the rights of the workingman but it recognizes and always has recognized the right of the workingman to organize in social unions and institutions for the purpose of making himself strong and of providing himself with the instrument, the representation, required to enable him to conduct his relations with his employer.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY

All this is nothing new in the Church. Whenever the Church has had the liberty required to make her beneficent influence felt, that which is called Christian Democracy has prevailed in society. An illustrious Catholic sociologist has defined this Christian Democracy in the following language: "An organization of society so that every social, juridical and economic force, fully developed, coöperates to the common good of society and thus contributes, in the last analysis, to the private well-being of the popular classes." Dear sons, meditate these concepts and see for yourselves whether or not among the doctrines of hatred that are being preached to you, you can find anything as profound, as noble, as productive of good, as this.

THE GUILDS OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL AGENCIES OF TODAY

What were the guilds of the Middle Ages? Ask the leaders: What were they in reality, in last analysis, but syndical institutions carried to their highest perfections, animated by the Christian spirit? What is the significance of the marvelous growth of the social works and institutions which, even though a thousand difficulties are raised by sectarian governments against the Church, with the life breathed

into them by Christ, have arisen in modern times? True it is that these works and institutions have not unchained the storms which characterize labor movements inspired by those who hate Christ. The reason is that their purpose was to achieve the true well-being of the workingman, his effective liberation, not to satisfy the unrestrained ambitions of a few false redeemers.

THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY ACCORDING TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The Church has also a doctrine which belongs absolutely to her regarding the nature of property. The right of property does not signify unlimited freedom to do what man pleases with the material goods that are his. The Christian doctrine holds that property is a right belonging to the individual but it holds also that the owner has a lofty mission to fulfill in civil society, that in using and employing his economic goods he has the obligation always to have his vision centered on his eternal destinies. In this connection, one reads in the Encyclical "Rerum Novarum," the following quoted from St. Thomas Aquinas: "Man should not consider his outward possessions as his own but as common to all, so as to share them without difficulty when others are in need. Whence the Apostle saith: 'Command the rich of this world . . . to give with ease, to communicate.'"

VORACIOUS USURY AND CAPITALISM WITHOUT MERCY

Not only does the teaching of the Catholic Church impose the general obligation of aiding those who are in need but this obligation itself has always been set up as a bulwark against the excessive amassing of riches. What man has made efforts greater than those that the Church has made to prevent the evils of greedy usury and the unmentionable injustices of merciless capitalism? Where shall we find teachings more precise or more vigorous with regard to the abuses of capital than we find in Catholic theology?

LEO XIII AND SMALL PROPERTY

What is even more important, the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII, in the Encyclical which we have quoted, echoing the traditional teachings of the Church herself, said that "it is better that a very great number of people be owners."

This formula, simple in appearance, is of supreme importance. It signifies that private persons, associations and social institutions, and the State should plan their action in a manner to make property accessible to the greatest number of individuals and families in the country. In this way population is stabilized, rooted in the earth which sustains it; strong rural classes are formed, united, healthy in soul and body, devoted to country and willing and capable in times of social or political crisis to defend justice and order, always prepared to defend liberty and, when the country is in danger, prepared generously to shed their blood in its defense.

THE LEYES DE REFORMA AND THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM

This teaching is not to be realized by destroying the life of corporations as did the authors of the so-called *Leyes de Reforma*, promulgated about the middle of the nineteenth century, at a time when sectarian strife was at its worst. Those so-called laws brought communal and collective ownership to an end, they broke up and squandered the patrimony of the villages. It is true to say, therefore, that those who recently caused the agrarian problem are those anti-Christian legislators who at the time to which we refer were the authors, with the encouragement of Masonry, of the laws mentioned. By those laws they sought to take from the Church her social influence by reducing her properties to nothing; and capitalism and latifundism struck their merciless claws into the wounded flesh of the Mexican people, the inevitable result of the suppression of collective ownership and of the impoverishment of the Church which had always been disposed and many times did come to the relief of the middle classes and the poor.

CONDITIONS THAT MUST BE MET TO SOLVE THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM

The problem to bring ownership of the land within the reach of the greatest number of those who live by the labor of their hands will never be solved by merely distributing lands. Those who are to cultivate the lands must be technically prepared, provided with capital on terms which will

help the future owner to free himself from debt, and legislation must be enacted that will effectively prevent the small owner from squandering his patrimony because of his lack of training.

"Lands are to be taken wherever they are found." Such was the rule and it has been obeyed. With what result? The *ejidatario* (small proprietor) is not truly the owner of the land; he does not feel himself secure in its improvement and cultivation; he feels that at any moment, by intrigue or by violence, or because of some political change, the parcel allotted to him will be taken away from him. Because of this lack of confidence, he finds himself subject to the *cacique*, the political adventurer, whose only means of support is sterile agitation and whose every effort has for its purpose to derive profit rapidly from his precarious, transitory situation at the expense of those who till the land. It has been alleged that the purpose of the program is the effective and positive emancipation of those who till the land, but in reality these, submerged in the horrors of political intrigue, find themselves in a condition not far removed from slavery.

PRACTICAL SOLUTION OF THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM ACCORDING TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION

Accepting for its norm those conditions demanded by nature, in its effort to organize and train the rural classes, Catholic social action has pointed out the steps to be taken to that end at a time when the country was still under the liberal régime (under which the interest of workingmen and farmers suffered so much). At that time Catholic social action in Mexico, among other steps, called attention to the need for the establishment of farm credit banks which it held to be an effective agency most urgently needed. This happened long before even the first symptoms of armed movements were perceived. If this effort to find a solution for this serious problem failed, it was because an all-absorbing dictatorship opposed it. In this direction nothing solid has been accomplished. While one must admit that banks for the purpose indicated have been established, one must not forget that hatred is never constructive.

THE CHURCH IN MEXICO

Some allege that it is not precisely Catholic teaching that injures the laborer but that, in Mexico, the Church has deplorably failed in her redeeming mission.

False! Let them name those who stood between the conqueror and the conquered race! Were they not the missionaries, members of the several religious Orders, friars, who made themselves the defenders and protectors of the Indians, devoted themselves to their education and to raising them out of the horrors of human sacrifice and the iniquity of idolatry so that they might enjoy true civilization? To the everlasting glory of the Church and of Catholic Spain they never lost hope that the aboriginal peoples would be redeemed as is proved by the record for all time in the pages of our own history, as it is proved in the pages of the history of the world. More, the very formation of the present Mexican nationality (the union of two races), conquered and conquering, in the melting pot of Christian faith we owe to that heroic labor of redemption. If under Paul III the Church had not stood firm, declaring the Indian capable of receiving the Sacraments; if self-sacrificing missionaries had not labored to defend the rights and the interests of the Indians; if the Spanish Crown had failed to found its admirable *Legislacion de Indias* on Catholic principles; the lot of the Indians would have been like that of the aboriginal peoples in regions conquered by Protestants—cruel extirpation, implacable and systematic, carried to its logical conclusion, as it was by those nations wherever they established themselves. Turn your eyes to the country that is our neighbor. It was conquered by Protestants. Estimate for yourselves the enormity of the crime committed against the redskins and many other tribes who by the ferocity of the white man were made to bite the dust.

Look, on the other hand, and consider the unbroken chain of works of every kind inspired by the Church, founded by her and through centuries supported by her, in favor of the working classes, of the lowly and the needy.

Then came the so-called *Reforma*. Even at that time the Church, finding her situation precarious because of the confiscations to which she was subjected, gave evidence in our country of the truth of that which one of her enemies

said in her regard: "She is the eternal reconstructionist." In spite of the stubborn, unrelenting hostility of the liberal régime, countless are the works in many fields which she carried out with admirable devotion and success.

THE FAILURE OF LIBERALISM, THE FAILURE OF SOCIALISM AND OF COMMUNISM

Liberalism, an outworn system, has grown old and is bankrupt. It does not bring true prosperity to a people. That it enslaves the workingman is evident. Socialism and Communism, likewise, will bankrupt themselves. They reduce society to the most horrible of slaveries and establish an economy of hunger and poverty. Liberalism, Socialism and Communism march toward inevitable bankruptcy because they refuse to recognize the dictates of nature. They want to violate principles that are fundamental, necessary, the very foundations of social life. They go so far as to try to expel God from society. They seek to sow hatred toward Him in the hearts of all. Nature and God, her Author, revenge themselves, punishers of those who rebel against them and thus prove beyond doubt and with the overwhelming evidence of facts, that, instead of bringing to the laboring man the happiness they promise, these rebels plunge him further into the depths of ruin and depravity.

IN CHRIST ONLY IS SAFETY

Beloved sons, never allow yourselves to doubt that in Christ Jesus alone is salvation to be found because in Him alone are to be found the origin and living source of that true love which redeems man and only in Him do we find a philosophy which truly explains the sufferings and the heritage of mankind.

Rid yourselves of the prejudices which ignorance and hatred have implanted in your hearts and be convinced that nowhere but in the teachings of Catholicism is there to be found an explanation of the problems which beset mankind and along with their explanation their solution also.

KARL MARX, FALSE TEACHER

Do not deceive yourselves, seeking a solution in the perverse theories of Karl Marx, who is held up to you as a kind of new Messiah, the supreme teacher of the workingman.

His teachings are sophisms. They are supported or seek to support themselves on hypotheses that are false,—like the lie that the life of peoples is wholly the result of their material interests. The "materialistic concept of history" is a theory that insults humanity. Over the fortunes of peoples and society, the influence of the demand for spiritual culture far outweighs the influence of material interests, because the soul of man is immortal and, in this life, overcoming poverty it never ceases in its search for heaven and the things that do not perish.

SOCIAL CLASSES

Do not heed those who advocate a classless society. A society without classes is impossible. Can you conceive in your imagination of a human body composed only of feet, or hands, or heads? Social classes are indispensable. They make it possible for men to live together with order. Even those who are outspoken enemies of the social hierarchy set themselves up as the aristocrats of the revolution, millionaires living in splendor, leaders, chiefs, despots, masters of the fortunes of the workingman. Dear sons, never set yourselves against nature because in doing that you are sure to be crushed!

SOCIAL CLASSES AND CATHOLICISM

Notice that an aristocracy which denies God always and inevitably tries to find something to set up in the place of God. This is evident from what has happened in our own country in our day. Social classes that are truly Christian, on the other hand, of necessity, subject themselves to and get their inspiration from the austere doctrine of Christian Democracy. What differentiates a true directing class is the fact that it serves and not the fact that it is served. An illustrious prelate, a glory of the German Hierarchy, Emmanuel von Ketteler, the precursor of Leo XIII in matters of social principles, wrote these vigorous words:

Let us apply to civil society the comparison which the Apostle applies to the Church, namely, the comparison of the body and its members. The existence of every social class, each having its own character, is thus seen in a certain sense to be justified by God. But these social classes, it would be better to say those who form these social classes, have a right to the name, only if they are truly ani-

mated by the divine idea, the only idea upon which their existence can be justified. If the divine idea were ever abandoned, man would be deserving of contempt in proportion to the loftiness of the condition in which God had placed him. The apostle who loses his zeal is fit only to be trampled under foot by man. So too, the upper class which forgets its duties, devoting itself to luxury, abandoning itself to pleasures, to idleness, and to pride, is fit only for a like ending.

TEACHINGS OF THE POPES

Read over and over and meditate on the teachings that are embodied in the enlightening Encyclicals issued by His Holiness, Leo XIII, and His Holiness, Pius XI,—the "*Rerum Novarum*" whose teachings were heard by a world at a time that now has passed, by men who were amazed by the vigor and clearness of its teaching, but which, at the same time, they found profoundly humane; and the "*Quadragesimo Anno*" which has now appeared, confirming the teachings contained in the earlier Encyclical.

If among you there are some who cannot devote themselves to this kind of study, go to those who can impart to you the principles which underlie these teachings, so necessary for the salvation of society and of the workingman himself.

CORPORATIONS

Prepare yourselves with determination for the splendid work of organizing our country on the basis of the Corporation, of erecting the Mexican State on the sound principles of the Corporation. The world is disillusioned of liberalism. It will soon be disillusioned of Communism. The Catholic idea is beginning to give new life and vigor to a social and economic organization in which the group, the guild, is recognized as the unit. The history of our days already records the names of two Catholic statesmen—Dolfuss in Austria and Oliviera Salazar in Portugal.

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

Be mindful of the teachings of her who was the author of our nationality and of our country. With gratitude overflowing, ponder the fact that the Virgin of Guadalupe, divine sculptress of our Mexico, lofty symbol of our fatherland, is anxious to permit to fall, like some refreshing shower, all the graces, all the blessings and all the benefactions of which

the holy Church, the immaculate spouse of the Lamb, is the depository.

THE MEXICAN FATHERLAND

Never lose faith, therefore, in the splendid destinies of Mexico and of the Church in our country. With indignation repudiate everything which might chill the ardor of the love we owe her as our mother. Be convinced that if at any time her sons look upon her with disrespect or with indifference, then life with ideals will be ended and the era of uncertainty and betrayals will begin; then the home will be abandoned, our traditions will be denied. The Blessed Virgin and the holy religion of her crucified Son will be forgotten. This misfortune will never befall us because the most Blessed Virgin did not appear in Mexico to fail and also because in her the fatherland and the Catholic religion have been signed with the sign of the suffering and the blood of many heroes and of many martyrs.

As evidence of divine benediction, accept, beloved sons, this blessing which we give to you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

* * * *

The above Pastoral, dated at Mexico City, June 12th, is signed by His Excellency the Most Rev. Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, Apostolic Delegate to Mexico and Archbishop of Morelia, nine other Archbishops and thirty-six Bishops, including the Vicar Capitular of Mexico City and the Vicar Apostolic of Lower California.

Mexico, Cárdenas, and the Church

JAIME CASTIELLO, S.J.

Reprinted from America in the issue of July 11, 1936.

THE teaching of Communism, atheism, and the imparting of a very unsavory sort of sexual instruction is still obligatory in the Mexican schools. . . . I would call attention especially to the textbook entitled "Sexual Instruction in the Mexican Schools," by Dr. John L. Soto and Prof. Pérez y Soto, Inspector of Schools in the Federal District. This work is edited by the Patria Publishing Company whose connections with the Mexican Ministry of Education are well known. This summer the book may be out of print; let me put down some of the chapter headings. In the first chapter the importance and difficulties of sexual instruction are stressed. In the second the following subjects are treated: Mysticism and Sex, Neurasthenia, Hysterics, Sexual Neurasthenia, Prophylaxy of Sexual Psychopathic States. In the third the following themes are developed: Sexual Characters, Concept and Classification of Intersexuality, Hermaphroditism, Virilism, Feminism, Physiological Intersexuality, Homosexuality, Psychic Intersexuality, Prophylaxy of Homosexuality and Psychic Intersexuality. The fourth and fifth chapters deal mostly with venereal diseases. Such are the topics in which the boys and girls are instructed in the public schools of Mexico.

Those interested in visual methods of teaching might investigate the school posters vigorously propagated by the Cárdenas administration. Abundant stars and sickles, priests and capitalists being strung up, apocalyptic apotheoses of Marx, Lenin, and other Communist worthies are their principal themes.

. . . The Cárdenas administration passed and is enforcing the Law of Nationalization of Property. According to this law any private house where religion is taught, or which is used for for any religious purpose whatever, automatically becomes State property. No proof is needed that religion is being taught in the house. It is enough that there should

be a presumption. A very prominent Mexican lawyer stated a short time ago that since the passing of the law, and in Mexico City alone, some 2,000 private houses have been denounced. This summer Americans who care to look into the matter will find out what an admirable opportunity for racketeering and blackmail this law is providing.

Among the first victims were the Archbishops of Puebla and Morelia. The Archbishop of Puebla had to live somewhere, so he lived with his sister. His sister's house was declared State property. The Archbishop of Morelia had also to live somewhere. So he lived in his own house. The house was declared to be State property and confiscated. Now he still lives in his own house but he has to pay rent to the Government. These are facts that might be multiplied.

Tourists who care to look up past numbers of the *Official Government Gazette* will find a good many significant facts. Let them turn back to the April numbers, which they will find in the public library. They will read there that in the course of that month forty Church properties were confiscated and given over to local authorities. The Church lost all her property in 1856. During the Diaz administration it again acquired enough property to keep it going. A good deal of it was confiscated during the revolution of 1914. The Cárdenas administration is now taking care of the rest. The *Official Government Gazette* informs us that on April 1st of the present year the parish church of Zacapoaxtla in the State of Puebla was turned over to the Mayor of the village to serve as a post office.

On the 6th the Church of St. Catherine of Siena in Puebla was given over to the town council to be made into an art academy.

On the 7th the College of St. Agnes in Cuernavaca was turned into an agrarian club. On the same day the church of St. Mary of Grace in Guadalajara was transformed into a club for the use of teachers.

On the 9th the church of the village of Etucuario in Michoacán became a cultural center.

On the 11th the church of the Josephine Sisters in Patzcuaro was handed over to the town council and was made into a Communist school.

On the 15th the Beaterio convent of Guadalajara was turned into a military hospital.

On the 16th the parish priest's house in the town of Huemantla became the local office of the Forestry Department.

On the 20th the house of the parish priest of San Luis de Acatlán was transformed into a post office. On that same date the Salesian College of Tacuba, Mexico City, was turned into some sort of military school.

On the 22nd the courtyard of the Church of San Juan del Río was made into a health center and the Church of the Third Order of St. Francis in Xochimilco was closed.

On the 28th the college which the Jesuits had founded for the Indians in the Taraumara Mission was handed over to the local authorities to serve as a Communist school.

On the 30th the property of the Church of St. Anthony was turned into a slaughter house.

It would be tedious to go on enumerating. Visitors to Mexico will have ample opportunity not only to verify these facts but to obtain many more.

We hope, then, that American visitors to Mexico . . . will see many things. Only let them not adhere too persistently to the official Government guides. They may be slightly biased. If they need a Baedeker let them take with them Father Parson's "Mexican Martyrdom." And perhaps they will care to get in touch with those pariahs of Mexican life: the priests on whose shoulders falls the entire weight of the most terrible legal persecution. They should also try to interview some of the families whose homes have been confiscated because the catechism was taught within them.

Perhaps this summer, Americans will understand why Mexicans are not sure that Cárdenas is well disposed and why they are not over-enthusiastic about a few churches which have been returned to them. The fact is that the souls of their children are being massacred. We are back in the times of the Aztecs. With this difference, however. Whereas the Aztecs butchered 20,000 prisoners in one year and then proceeded to devour their bodies, the Cárdenas administration is doing its best to murder the souls of the young. . . .

The Calles Aftermath

RANDALL POND

Reprinted from the Sign in the issue of June, 1936.

PLUTARCO ELIAS CALLES, the hard-faced man who struggled up the political ladder from bartender to President and dictator of his country, sits secluded from the world in a California home. . . . He sees himself, possibly, as an unsuccessful school teacher, accused of mismanagement of funds. The school teacher, transformed into a bartender and "bouncer" in a Nogales, Mexico, saloon, joined the revolutionists and began his climb to wealth and power. Friendship with Carranza, and the bearded one's general-in-chief, Alvaro Obregon, projected him into the military picture as a factor to be reckoned with in any division of spoils.

General of cavalry in 1920, aid of Obregon in his dispute with Carranza (who paid with his life), Calles emerged into civilian and political life. . . . Obregon's term ended and the man whom Mexico named *El Turco* achieved his Presidential ambition with election in 1924. From that time on, until Good Friday, 1936, Mexico was never free of the Calles octopus. Its tentacles extended into every phase of life; every conceivable phase of national life paid tribute to men whose one object was wealth and power. . . .

They were the years of blood and, paradoxically, the years of public adulation for the "Iron Man of Mexico." The opening of the Church persecution in 1926, entered upon for no sensible reason, meant martyrdom to thousands of Catholics, among whom the name of Father Miguel Pro, S.J., is a shining light. Men who had the temerity to protest these outrages were silenced with imprisonment, exile or death. Generals Serrano and Gomez, told that they could campaign for the Presidency in 1928, were treacherously shot down in cold blood on trumped-up charges of treason.

But the adulation was sweet. Samuel Gompers came down to help the so-called Socialist, Luis Morones, organize the *Confederacion Regional Obreros Mexicanos*, popularly known as CROM. Gompers came home to tell everyone what wonderful progress Mexico was making under the Calles régime. . . .

There was still dark work to be done, however. General Escobar revolted in 1929 and was drowned in blood.

The so-called "Cristero revolt" dragged on and was finished only after the leaders were quietly slaughtered in violation of the truce agreement which the Calles mannikins had signed with them. Four supporters of Candidate Vasconcelos were beaten to death in 1930 while Ortiz Rubio, "the dummy that spoke," was a "Calles President." And the Church persecution kept on when Portes Gil and Abelardo Rodriguez responded to the string-jerks of the "Iron Man" who had grown fat, rich, and probably a bit careless.

He was careless in picking Lazaro Cárdenas to be President in 1934; in selecting Tomas Garrido Canabal for Minister of Agriculture in the new Cabinet; and in pretending to be out of public affairs while he was still the country's master mind. That year was, perhaps, the peak of his power. The Government jumped to the crook of his fingers. Foreign banks held large deposits of money in his name. Santa Barbara hacienda, El Tambor rancho, the Mante sugar mills, the beautiful home in Cuernavaca, the gorgeous house in the capital—all these were his. . . .

Good Friday morning, 1936, a cordon of soldiers, a quick trip to the landing field, and a big, tri-motored plane . . . carried within it the last remains of the Calles legend. Why Good Friday? . . . Strange it is that the man who had so bitterly persecuted the Church should have been given the political *coup de grâce* on the most sorrowful feast dedicated to the Founder of that Church!

President Cárdenas, the leading political figure, ostensibly resolved to root out of the country every vestige of Callismo. . . . What is behind it? First, Lombardo Toledano is behind it. The Communist leader, close adviser to Cárdenas, became the leading labor dictator in the country when Morones fell with Calles. Toledano rewrites the laws in terms of "socialism"; Toledano dictates the grounds on which strikes will be settled; Toledano writes of the "decayed capitalism" of other nations; Toledano promises the fruits of the Russian paradise to all who join his union, his proletarian uplift association, his storm troops against the bourgeoisie.

After Toledano, there is Portes Gil, whom Calles made President when Ortiz Rubio tried to think for himself in 1930. Gil's racket is organizing the peasants and acting as president of the National Revolutionary Party which the

Constitution-worshipping Cárdenas still allows to function, despite its illegalities and corruption. . . .

These are the successors to Calles—Cárdenas, Toledano and Gil. These three, who proclaim the rule of law and the Constitution, violated it by exiling Calles, Morones, Leon and Ortega. The Constitution forbids such action against a Mexican citizen, no matter what be his crime. The Constitution was ignored. And what excuse did the Government give for its action?

Toledano tried to frame it, in twisted phrases, on Easter Sunday, April 12th. Turning his back on French revolutionary doctrine, forsaking the liberals who tried to destroy the Church, rejecting the philosophy which any sincere lawyer must hold, he said: "No one in Mexico can invoke the rights of man by which his liberty is respected simply because he is a man. This is an anti-revolutionary interpretation. He has a right to claim protection, he has a right to claim his prerogatives in accordance with the letter of the law, but only when he is not opposed to the revolution or opposed to the collective interest."

Could Hitler or Mussolini, whom he professes to despise; or Lenin or Stalin, whom he openly worships, have done better than the new Marxian prophet of Mexico in declaring that man is a servant of the State? Here, surely, is a legal interpretation that denies a man, be he guilty or innocent, the protection of the law if he differs with those in power. Carried to its furthest extension, Toledano's declaration means the end of law for those who feel called upon to criticize the course of political or social events in Mexico. Political or social activity, which was not approved by the Government has been difficult of operation in Mexico since 1876. The Revolution of 1910, whose "ideals" are lovingly extolled by Cárdenas, Toledano and Gil, fought to free men of such restrictions. Toledano has brought it back, stronger, more insidious than ever.

Calles was the focus of all the dislike and distrust which had united leaders under the Cárdenas banner. Now that the menace is gone, can Cárdenas hold these men in check? Can he keep the leash on Toledano and Gil, always straining to be at each other's throats? Can he keep General Cedillo, boss of San Luis Potosi, loyal to him? Can he hold capital in the country and play with the fire of Communism?

China's Harvest

Reprinted from the Catholic Leader (India), in the issue of April 2, 1936.

CATHOLIC missions in China during 1934-1935 had one of their most successful years on record. A net increase of 96,450 new members, the largest gain for any year since 1913, brings the Catholic population of the country up to 2,818,839. These statistics are taken from the *Annuaire des Missions Catholiques de Chine* (Year-Book of Catholic Missions in China), published at Shanghai.

Conversions, which are reckoned according to the number of adult baptisms, reached a total of 96,680. There are 495,060 catechumens preparing for Baptism.

The *Annuaire*, which is compiled by the Jesuit Fathers of Siccawei, has several interesting studies. The density of the Catholic population, for example, is shown to have wide variations. It is as high as 4.0 per cent in Suiyuan Province, 3.2 per cent in Chahar, and 2.4 per cent in Hopei. It is as low as 0.1 per cent in Kwangsi, and only 0.03 per cent in Sikang near the Tibetan border.

Of the 125 ecclesiastical territories into which the country is now divided twenty-two are entrusted to the Chinese clergy.

Chinese and foreign priests now total 4,309. Chinese priests increased by eighty-eight last year, the greatest net increase on record, and they now constitute approximately 41 per cent of the entire clergy. The prospect for the future is bright; there are 935 seminarists in the major seminaries, 4,021 in minor seminaries, and 1,906 boys are preparing for entrance into the seminaries.

The number of Chinese Brothers has risen to 635; there are 532 Foreign Brothers. Of the 5,413 Sisters in China, 63 per cent are Chinese.

In spite of the extreme financial difficulties which the missions all over China had to face during the year, the number of catechists employed by missionaries was raised to 13,817, an increase of 17 per cent during the twelve months.

The grand total of Baptisms, 565,792, surpasses by almost 64,000 that of the year before. Figures for the spiritual returns of the year show that there were 10,820,486 Confessions and 27,327,233 Holy Communions.

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